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PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ASSISTANCE

Programme of assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Administrator

I. PURPOSE

1. The present report contains an account of the activities of the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian people during 1993, including its dramatically changing financial situation, programme delivery and strategy, operational highlights and the coordinating role played by UNDP.

II. FINANCIAL SITUATION

2. The core resources of the Programme have been provided by the Governing Council through the allocations from the Special Programme Resources. These allocations are the following:

Second cycle	(1980-1981)	$ 3.5 million
Third cycle	(1982-1986)	$10.0 million
Fourth cycle	(1987-1991)	$12.0 million
Fifth cycle	(1992-1995)	$10.5 million a/

a/ Represents 70 per cent of the original SPR earmarkings.

3. Since the inception of the Programme, complementary resources have been provided by Canada ($1.0 million), Greece ($80,000), Italy ($23.3 million), Japan ($13.5 million), Jordan ($457,000), Norway ($2.0 million), Tunisia ($48,000), the United States of America ($6.0 million), and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations ($1.0 million). These

non-core resources have been provided in various forms, including in-trust arrangements as well as individual management service agreements.

III. PROGRAMME DELIVERY AND STRATEGY

4. The Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People achieved a substantially increased level of expenditures in 1993 over the previous years. Overall objectives of the Programme evolved throughout the year in response to the rapidly changing political situation and especially the signing on 13 September 1993 in Washington of the Declaration of Principles between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel.

5. The Programme strategy in 1993, formulated in full collaboration with Palestinian counterparts, focused on four primary development areas. The first of these represents a concerted effort to support the development of managerial and technical capabilities in the public sector, especially in the emerging central governance institutions. UNDP has extended assistance to the newly established institutional structures to enable them to rise to their substantive political and economic challenges. The second area of focus is to stimulate and encourage economic development, particularly in the field of industry, commerce and trade, agriculture and tourism. Human development, the third area, seeks not only to alleviate poverty, but to narrow the social, economic and gender gaps in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The fourth strategic development objective, the protection and management of the environment, represents a very significant part of overall Programme activities and effort.

IV. OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

6. UNDP provided technical cooperation to emerging national governance institutions, such as the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, to facilitate the assumption of managerial and technical functions. Support by UNDP to local public institutions, for example municipalities and water departments, enhanced their capacities to improve the delivery of public services.

7. The Programme launched a number of projects in 1993 with the aim of economic expansion and employment generation. Six industrial companies benefited from the Business Development Centre (BDC) revolving loan fund. These relatively large loans will translate into greater economic productivity in the industrial sector, more employment, and positive effect throughout the economy. The BDC also provided technical cooperation to the Palestinian Chambers of Commerce and to vocational training institutions through advisory services. In the agricultural sector, the Modern Irrigation Project provided nearly 600 farmers in the Gaza Strip with irrigation equipment and training to enable them to save water and increase productivity in a cost-effective manner.

8. The start-up of the Integrated Rural Development Project in 1993 was a significant community-based effort towards the goal of sustainable human development. Two villages in the northern West Bank were selected, on a pilot basis, for this project, which aims to alleviate poverty, upgrade health and education services, and improve water and sanitation systems in these rural

areas through infrastructure development and integrated training programmes. The completion of the Princess Alia Hospital in Hebron and the start of construction on the Beit Jala Hospital are bringing expanded and improved health care facilities to the West Bank. Ambulances, medical equipment, and assistance to the handicapped were also provided to various health institutions by the Programme. The construction of nine schools, many of them in rural areas, allowed better access to education facilities, particularly for girls, improved the physical classroom environment, and reduced the teacher-student ratio. The integration of women into the economy and their empowerment in governance structures have continued to be a main thrust of the Programme. UNDP launched a project that particularly targets women and their promotion in the Palestinian society and economy. The project plays an important coordination role among the various women's community-based organizations. After the signing of the Declaration of Principles, this initiative assumed even greater importance as Palestinian women redoubled efforts to assure an equitable position in the formulation of state and legal structures.

9. In 1993, the Programme worked extensively in the area of environmental management and protection through infrastructure projects, public awareness campaigns, and training programmes. UNDP designed and began construction of water distribution networks to improve the quality and quantity of the water supply to 20,000 residents of the old city of Nablus and nearly 100,000 residents of Rafah in the Gaza Strip. An ongoing project to upgrade the provision of water services to rural areas continued, providing running water to locals and households throughout the West Bank. A project to deepen and upgrade the well at Ein Samia in the central region was completed in 1993, providing 200,000 residents with a better and more reliable water supply. Sewage collection network projects continued and expanded in Bethlehem and the northern Gaza Strip. UNDP launched the Water Resources Action Programme in 1993, to coordinate the efforts of a task force of Palestinian professionals to plan for and manage the water resources of this region. A very important outcome of this project is expected to be a trained, well-organized Palestinian resource management team at the national level.

V. UNDP ROLE IN COORDINATION

10. Throughout 1993, the involvement of United Nations specialized agencies increased in development activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. UNDP played a central coordination and support role to the work of United Nations agencies such as the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The World Food Programme (WFP), in close cooperation with UNDP, launched a $3.4 million project for emergency food assistance to the non-refugee population of the Gaza Strip. A joint project between UNDP, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and UNICEF was initiated in 1993 in the context of the work of the Multilateral Working Group on Refugees to improve and expand community centres serving children and youth. UNDP provided logistical support to a multidisciplinary ILO mission in October 1993 to explore

modalities of future ILO involvement. The Programme, furthermore, provided considerable logistical and advisory support to the World Bank missions to the West Bank and Gaza Strip throughout 1993. Close working relationships have also been established with the recently established Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction. In addition, the Administrator represented the Secretary-General as head of the United Nations delegation at the Conference on Middle East Peace, which took place in Washington on 1 October 1993.

11. During the conference, the Administrator presented a report entitled "Supporting the Transition: An Immediate Response of the United Nations to the Interim Period in the West Bank and Gaza Strip", which emphasized the existing capacity of the three United Nations organizations (UNDP, UNICEF and UNRWA) having an active operational presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The report proposed that the three organizations could quickly undertake an additional $138.5 million in special programmes and activities to help maintain and improve services in areas over which Palestinians would assume responsibility as envisaged in the Declaration of Principles. Several participants in the Conference, at which over $2 billion in external assistance over a five-year period was pledged to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, made reference to the important role of United Nations organizations, including that of UNDP. Immediate efforts were initiated by UNDP to mobilize over $80 million in programmes for implementation over the 18-month period following the Conference. Thanks to the generosity of a number of donors, these efforts are showing encouraging results. They will make the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People one of the largest UNDP undertakings. Consequently, the Administrator has set in motion urgent measures to strengthen the programme's capacity, both in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as at headquarters, in order to prepare for its quickly expanding role.

12. UNDP continued to expand the initiative towards greater information exchange and cooperation between bilateral and multilateral donors. The second Compendium of Ongoing Technical Assistance Projects in the Occupied Palestinian Territories was published by UNDP in July 1993 and widely circulated. The Programme continued to coordinate sectoral working groups in the field of environment, health and the promotion of women in development.

13. At the request of the Office of the Secretary-General, the Director of the Programme participated in United Nations delegations to the Multilateral Working Groups of the Middle East peace process.

VI. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

14. The Executive Board may wish to:

(a) Take note of the present report; and

(b) Express its appreciation to the contributors to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People and appeal for additional funding resources.